

## THE PRESENT CONDITION OF INDIA

mode of thought. "Maharshi" Tagore,<sup>1</sup> by his learning and great piety, consolidated the Brahmo Samaj, but a more aggressive form of Hinduism was required and it found its prophets in Dayanand, the founder of the Arya Samaj, and Vivekanand, the St. Paul of the Ramakrishna Movement. For both of these religion was bound up with love of country, and the rehabilitation of Hinduism seemed a prerequisite for the New India. Lala Lajpat Rai, the great Punjab nationalist, was an Arya Samajist, and till to-day the Congress in North India has considerable Arya elements within it, though this is not calculated to endear it to the Muslims or Christians! But the study of English not only led to reform movements. The political philosophy of nineteenth-century England also had its effect. Indians began to feel that they had a right to share in the administration of their country. In 1885 the Englishman Hume founded the Congress to provide a platform for these new aspirations. The first President, Mr. W. C. Bonnerji, referred to the "consolidation of those sentiments of national unity that had their origin in our beloved Lord Ripon's reign."<sup>2</sup> At the beginning it was purely moderate in character, encouraging social reform and looking for its inspiration to British Liberalism. For many years it only touched a tiny minority of educated men. Acharya Kripa-lani, in his *Gandhian Way*<sup>^</sup> rather unkindly describes it as "a yearly assemblage of learned and ambitious lawyers" who "indulged in eloquence after the pattern of Burke, Sheridan and Gladstone, alternately denouncing and blessing their foreign masters whose creations they were." They believed that if they spoke loud and long they would get what they desired. They had a "pathetic" faith in British democracy. But as they became more critical the Government took fright and in 1892 forbade Government servants to join the Congress.

<sup>1</sup> Father of Rabindranath.

<sup>2</sup> He sent his wife to England, that his sons might be Englishman bom!